

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE  
MAINE

154 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
(202) 224-5344

E-Mail: [Olympia@snowe.senate.gov](mailto:Olympia@snowe.senate.gov)  
Web Site: <http://snowe.senate.gov>

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

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October 14, 2004

Dear Friends:

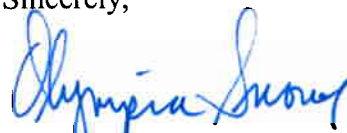
Thank you for this opportunity to express my greetings and congratulations as you gather for the Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism and the swearing in of Maine's AmeriCorps 2004-2005 volunteer members. Please accept my special thanks to the Maine Commission for Community Service and the Maine Volunteer Connection for making this event possible.

Service to our communities is one of the most honorable and long standing civic traditions that we have in the State of Maine. The values and convictions of the Maine Commission for Community Service and the Maine Volunteer Connection have made them leaders in this arena, fostering community service and volunteerism in meeting the human and environmental needs of our State. The list of projects that they and their volunteers have undertaken is just incredible. Congratulations to you all on a job well done!

Whether it is helping elderly Maine citizens apply for fuel assistance, or plowing through the woods to help maintain and establish nature trails in the wonderful foothills of Maine, AmeriCorps volunteers possess a sense of purpose and accomplishment in their efforts to make the world a better place to live. They are truly making a difference. As many volunteers present here today can surely attest, the good feelings from these acts of sharing and giving of one's time and energy is worth so much more than just accomplishing a goal. It means learning about people, your environment and how important it is to participate in a community, working together to bring order and purpose to so many lives. My sincere thanks go to each of the members for their willingness to serve in this capacity.

I hope you will all continue to volunteer in the future, and that the time spent as an AmeriCorps member has kicked off a lifetime tenure of giving. Thank you all for this opportunity to express my support for the work you do for the citizens of Maine. My best wishes to each one of you on continued success.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE  
United States Senator

AUBURN  
TWO GREAT FALLS PLAZA  
SUITE 7B  
AUBURN, ME 04210  
(207) 786-2451

AUGUSTA  
40 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 408C  
AUGUSTA, ME 04330  
(207) 622-8292

BANGOR  
ONE CUMBERLAND PLACE, SUITE 306  
BANGOR, ME 04401  
(207) 945-0432

BIDDEFORD  
231 MAIN STREET, SUITE 2  
BIDDEFORD, ME 04005  
(207) 282-4144

PORTLAND  
3 CANAL PLAZA, SUITE 601  
PORTLAND, ME 04101  
(207) 874-0883  
MAINE RELAY SERVICE  
TDD 1-955-3323

PRESQUE ISLE  
169 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 3  
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769  
(207) 764-5124

IN MAINE CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-432-1599

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United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

October 14, 2004

Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism  
c/o Maine Volunteer Connection  
P.O. Box 372  
Augusta, ME 04332

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your kind invitation to attend the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Blaine House Conference on Volunteerism. Although I am unable to be with you in person today, I am pleased to take this opportunity to recognize your outstanding efforts to foster community service and volunteer work in Maine.

The spirit of volunteerism is one of our state's greatest strengths. The Maine Commission for Community Service, in collaboration with the Maine Volunteer Connection, works tirelessly to encourage citizens to be actively involved in their communities. This conference provides an excellent opportunity for volunteer administrators, program managers, sponsors, and other partners to gain valuable insight on new and innovative ways to promote service opportunities.

Through its many educational and environmental programs and its partnerships with other service institutions, AmeriCorps has made invaluable contributions to our state. AmeriCorps volunteers have a unique and rewarding opportunity to reach out and better the lives of the people in the communities that they serve. These dedicated individuals use their time and talents to help in schools, non-profit organizations, local agencies, and other service groups. Whether building affordable housing, mentoring young children, or making sure rural Mainers have access to quality healthcare, more than 100 AmeriCorps volunteers are making a positive difference everyday in Maine.

As the new AmeriCorps members are sworn in today, I would like to express my appreciation for their exceptional spirit of service and their dedication to building stronger communities here in Maine. Please know that I will continue to work at the federal level to support both AmeriCorps and local volunteer organizations. You should all be very proud of your commitment to making Maine a better place.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

SMC:eaj